

my plants take up all my time not
employed in travelling

I have several good letters from
my wife who has thoroughly
enjoyed Niagara

Both Mr L. Stanford & Mrs
Crocker are away & it is doubtful
whether I shall see either of
them

Hope to find you & Mrs Gray
flourishing at Montreal

Ever truly yours

John Ball

San Francisco Cal: 26 July

My dear Gray I thought you will be
shocked to learn how little we have
done I can assure you that I have
enjoyed the journey extremely & found
abundant interest in many ways especially
botanical - The season you must recollect
has been (as happens so often to a traveller)
quite exceptional - So much snow has not
fallen in the Spring they say since 1816
& if we had known all the best things
to have done we have been to run straight
for the Sierra Nevada leaving the Rocky
Mountains to their own devices - The chief
practical difficulties have been to get
information and owing to the practices in
this country of constantly changing arrangements
as to trains stages & steamers we have found
that till you get to a place there was no
way of knowing when any conveyance would
start - Since we came west there have been
4 different time tables for the Union Pacific
& so of everything else - Mr Jackson could
not I believe have done anything for
us in Colorado and we lost the Grand Cañon
Gray's Peak was practically inaccessible

as well as Long's peak - I made sure of
Pike's and went expressly from ~~Marquette~~
to Colorado Springs to see Sergeant Hall
who is in charge of the station but lives
at Col. Springs - He told me that owing
to the snow I could not take a horse
& keep it for the night so I had to
give up that arrangement but had two
pleasant days botanizing the first about
the halfway house the second higher up
to where (above the timber line) snow
lay & alpine vegetation begins - It turned
out that Hall was not well posted up &
on the same day people who started early
found the trail clear & were able to ride
to the top - We went via Cheyenne to
Salt Lake city & thence to Truckee
& followed your route to Tahoe city
were detained a day because the steamer
& stage did not run but enjoyed it much
especially the visit to Tallac & Emerald
Bay - Then went by Greenwood to
Carson city & engaged a wagon & pair
to the Big Trees of Calaveras - The way
by Mono Lake seems at present very
doubtful - Snow lies down to 8000 ft
& patches even lower & no one has

crossed that way for some time - The Isabel
mine in Silver Creek has stopped working
Silver Mountain city has evaporated & you
find only empty sheds & a Hotel without
windows - we luckily got hospitality from
Mr Chalmers the Scotch Director of the mine
On the pass snow in places & only very lately
melted - so that I found but four plants
in flower - The drive through the forest
was delightful & the Big Trees of Calaveras
grand & impressive - But we found
that all the arrangements advertised
for July had been altered - Stages running
only three times a week & that to see
the Yosemite would cost us 9 days to Calaveras
San Francisco - We might probably
have done it by hiring vehicles but as it
cost us 100 dollars for the two days to
Calaveras we could not face the expense
of that mode of travelling - In fine rather
than spoil all the rest of the journey we
gave up the Yosemite & came here yesterday
evening Tomorrow go to Monterey & for
the rest shall do what we can -
When you recollect how new all this
flora is to me you will not be surprised
that I have collected largely & that